



SCHOOLS CATALOGUE
INFORMATION SERVICE

connections

ISSUE NO. 67 TERM 4 2008

ISSN 1440-2076

Available on the SCIS website at www.curriculum.edu.au/scis/connections/latest/htm

Print Post Approved PP 381667/00227

Using graphic organisers to teach information literacy

This article is based on the research that I undertook for my Master of Arts degree at UniSA from 2005–2007. The aim of this research was to ascertain to what extent teacher librarians are using graphic organisers as an educational tool to develop the information literacy skills of their students. I was looking for school library programs in which the learning resulting from the use of graphic organisers (including computer programs like Inspiration®) could be described.

Introduction

During the 1990s, Gardner's multiple intelligences (Gardner, 1993) began to have greater prominence in the development of methodologies in school curriculums. The concept of students who preferred a visual or spatial style of learning entered the radar of teachers. At this time, I began to think about how teacher librarians could use graphic organisers to cater for a wide range of preferred learning styles.

Teacher librarians have been primarily focused on written language as a preferred learning and communication style. They have worked with language and developed programs in the areas of traditional literacy. An example is children's and adolescent literature promotion and research skills (now more commonly known as information literacy skills). They have not necessarily focused on using spatial or visual learning techniques like graphic organisers to embrace a full range of learning styles and develop a broad range of literacy skills.

However, literacy now has a much broader meaning, such as that defined in statements like the SACE Literacy Policy (2006). This must change what teacher librarians do and how they do it in regard to information literacy – not just for senior school students but at all levels of school education. In a broader educational setting, we not only talk about information literacy but also about visual, ICT, media, thinking and multicultural literacy (among other forms) and about the interplay between the various literacies.

The literature

Despite a great deal of research and writing on information literacy and graphic organisers as separate topics, there is limited research linking the ideas together in a school education setting.

Information literacy studies

Zurkowski (1974) coined the term 'information literacy'. He suggested that the top priority of the National Commission on Libraries and Information Science in the USA should be establishing a major national program to achieve universal information literacy by 1984. This was a very ambitious goal.

There are seemingly infinite attempts to construct a definition of information literacy – from single-sentence definitions to lengthy articles. Capra and Ryan (2002) came up with a simple but comprehensive definition of the concept with 'information problem-solving skills that enable independent and effective learning'.

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Using graphic organisers to teach information literacy (cont.)

More recently, Combes (2005) asked the question: What is information literacy? Her investigation of the literature revealed that information literacy 'has different meanings for different people'. So she tried to answer her question in the context of a further question: What constitutes an information literate person?

For Combes, an information literate person:

- is able to use technology
- is also ICT literate
- is able to use a range of information resources
- has a range of well-developed literacy skills
- is able to use information
- is able to manage the increasingly complex information environment.

Defining the qualities required to become information literate is a useful strategy because it allows us to focus on the skills that our students will need to attain this status.

Graphic organiser studies

Graphic organisers were first described as a type of advance organiser presented prior to learning so that the learner could organise and interpret new, incoming information.

Novak and Gowin (1984) wrote in detail about using concept maps for meaningful learning. They believed that concept maps can clarify the key ideas in a specific task. The flexibility of concept maps means that they can be:

- a planning tool
- a visual road map, providing pathways to connect meanings
- a schematic summary of what has been learned
- an improved evaluation technique.

Nettelbeck (2005) believes that there is nothing difficult about using graphic organisers in teaching programs, though it requires a supportive, cooperative, risk-taking culture within schools. It doesn't mean that essay writing is abandoned forever. Rather, it gives teachers the option to diversify learning tasks and make learning more creative, open-ended and exciting. He believes that concept mapping is one way to create a high-capacity educational system in which 'highly skilled teachers are able to generate creativity and ingenuity among their pupils'.

Nettelbeck provides several examples from Australian classrooms of creative Inspiration® applications complete with concept maps.

- **Year 7 English class** – created an Inspiration® map to show understanding of the relationships between the main characters in JK Rowling's *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* as an alternative to a traditional essay response.
- **Year 8 Science class** – summarised their understanding of the carbon cycle.
- **Year 9 History class** – worked in groups to sort out understanding of the Australian federal system of government.
- **Year 10 Religious Education class** – used concept maps to summarise their understanding of theological concepts such as one God, faithfulness, revelation, covenant and promise.

For an overview of graphic organiser websites useful to schools, try Shambles. This is a website designed to support international school communities in 17 countries in South East Asia. It is available at <http://www.shambles.net/pages/school/mindmaps/>

Information literacy and graphic organiser studies

Studies that examine the effects of graphic organisers on information literacy development are fewer in number and have been of relatively recent interest. In her doctoral dissertation, American researcher Carol Gordon (1995) combined her interests in information literacy, education and graphic organisers to comprehensively investigate the effect of graphic organiser training on the searching practices of students.

Gordon created a Grade 10 Genetics research assignment that integrated information literacy instruction with Biology curriculum, using a process approach based on the widely accepted Kuhlthau model. She found that mappers: showed a preference for print rather than electronic search tools, spent more time in print indexes, did more in their searching – they were more thorough and/or efficient searchers, were more inclined to concept-driven searching and were more likely to make metacognitive judgments.

In electronic searching, mappers: spent less time searching, worked in

fewer and shorter sessions, used fewer search words, preferred subject heading rather than keyword searching and performed more depth rather than breadth searches.

Gordon concluded that mappers were more sensitive to the electronic environment, more efficient in the way that they used their time, more concise in their repertoire of search terms and more thorough in engaging in more depth searching (p 16).

Process

Participants for my research study were recruited from teacher librarians in South Australia through the listserv SLASANET and interstate through the listserv OZTL_NET. The respondents came from all states of Australia, all levels of schooling and all major school education systems.

Both quantitative and qualitative data collection techniques were adopted. A questionnaire in email format and an interview of selected respondents were used to collect data on the behaviours, understandings, attitudes and practices of teacher librarians. Responses from the questionnaires were used to construct the themes and questions for the interview stage. For purely practical reasons, the interviews were limited to South Australian teacher librarians.

Results

The questionnaire respondents and interviewees showed great diversity of interest and expertise in using graphic organisers to teach a variety of literacies. Some of the more universal findings included the following.

- The most common KLAS were SOSE (including History and Geography) and Science.
- The most common topics were the Human Body (including human reproduction and disease), the Environment, Animals and Australia.
- Both girls and boys responded positively to curriculum incorporating graphic organisers.
- Teacher librarians worked most frequently with students from Reception to Grade 10.
- Students with a wide range of ability levels responded positively to curriculum incorporating graphic organisers.
- Computer-based graphic organiser programs were widely used, but

Inspiration® was the most popular. Other computer programs used and described as graphic organisers were: Kidspiration, Genius, ReasonAble, Freemind, Word, PowerPoint, SMART, MindManager, Publisher, Wordshark, Jiig Cal, Photo Story, ConceptDraw, MINDMAP and KartOO. (KartOO is a search engine that returns search results as a concept map – it's worth a look at <http://www.kartoo.com>)


- Information literacy was the literacy type most often addressed by teacher librarians. However, graphic organisers were of benefit to students working in all literacy types. Graphic organisers have been used to develop many different literacies: information literacy, traditional literacy (including creative writing), ICT literacy, visual literacy and thinking literacy (including higher order thinking and metacognition).
- Teacher librarians mostly worked to the cooperative planning and teaching model. Planning with teachers was the most common way of engaging with colleagues.

- Jamie McKenzie's visits to Australia had clearly influenced teacher librarians who had attended his seminars (in which graphic organisers were part of the message). Other sages mentioned in this area were Tony Buzan (UK) and John Joseph (Australia).

Teacher librarians identified 'planning their research' and 'ordering and organising information under main headings' as the principal educational benefits of using graphic organisers. 'To be assisted in scaffolding' emerged as the main benefit for younger students.

Conclusion

This research study revealed an impressive commitment from teacher librarians to their profession. Teacher librarians in this study took responsibility for their own professional development, thought deeply about pedagogical issues and showed initiative in developing curriculums appropriate to their student populations. The teacher librarians were involved in a wide range of curriculum initiatives. Their curriculum role gave them

freedom to work with information literacy and graphic organisers, which are more about methodology and process, and operate outside the usual KLA content constraints. 

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The full article with definitions and bibliography appears in the online version of *Connections* 67 at <http://www.curriculum.edu.au/scis/connections/latest.htm>

An impossible passion: Young people, contemporary popular culture and reading

This article is an edited version of Karen Brookes' SCIS Oration, presented at the 2007 biennial conference of the Australian School Library Association (ASLA). A longer version of the paper is to be published later this year in *Access*, the ASLA national journal.

As educators, we long to introduce students to the timeless messages contained in conventional, book-told stories and some of their artistic and narratively dense film counterparts. For young people, though, reading of conventional narratives seems to have become an 'impossible passion': one that takes a back seat to the exciting world of blockbuster movies, celebrities, brands, iPods, YouTube, computer graphic imaging and continuous stimulation. Within the education system, on the other hand, popular culture can itself be seen as

the 'impossible passion': one that many educators feel has no legitimate space in pedagogy.

If we want students to develop 'multimodal literacy skills crucial to life in the twenty-first century' (Gardner, 2007, p93), then we have to familiarise ourselves not only with the 'social landscape of teenagers' (Gardner, 2007, p 420), but with popular culture as well. Educators need to equip our students to become literate readers of corporate and popular culture and consumers who can make informed choices. While kids may appear 'savvy' and able to deal with the images and ideas that assail them, they do not necessarily possess the cognitive skills or wisdom to contextualise and manage these materials, many of which are very adult.

To assist students in this way, educators themselves need to comprehend the roles of advertising, brands, logos and visual media in young people's lives, linking contemporary forms to familiar historical ones to reveal an ongoing relationship and dialogue. It is also essential for educators to be conversant with various forms of digital technology such as multimedia, the Internet and electronic games, and to teach students to comprehend and critique them.

The role of school libraries

School libraries play an important role in this context. As Wendy Steadman Stephens writes, 'podcasting, blogging and wikis are easy to use and don't require local software installations ... School librarians need to leverage their school's investment in digital infrastructure and equipment to teach students everything from

An impossible passion: Young people, contemporary popular culture and reading (cont.)

copyright restrictions to a more nuanced understanding of critical literacy in online environments' (Stephens, 2007).

Scott and Plourde argue that if students are to succeed in the Information Age, 'teacher librarians must work in collaboration with teachers and administrators. They must help students move from information retrieving to deep understanding and knowledge-based outcomes defined by curriculum standards' (Scott & Plourde, 2007, p 420).

This process can only occur when traditional teaching practices join new ones (see Sternberg, Kaplan & Borck, 2007): that is, when popular culture, books and reading collide.

Challenges in adopting ICT

A study of 15 experienced high school teachers in Victoria by Cope and Ward in 2002 (cited in D'Silva, 2006, p 16) identified a number of reasons why teachers may be reluctant to fully embrace technology. These include high costs and inadequate time to prepare and train teachers in hardware and software. Staff also have legitimate concerns about assessment (see especially D'Silva, 2006, pp 17–18).

Yet the degree of control that educators have over the role of ICT is sometimes forgotten. Does the student search the Net looking for information to enhance knowledge of a specific subject – Googling, using Wikipedia and particular CD-ROMs or other programs? Does ICT become part of the assessment process in that the student uses a program like PowerPoint, builds a blog, makes a movie, designs an animation, creates an avatar in an online environment or communicates with other students outside the classroom and across the globe to build understanding? As educators we decide if, when and how much ICT is incorporated in the learning environment to facilitate learning.

Reading

Many educators are still wary about what young people are reading these days, particularly in graphic novels, magazines and comics. But perhaps our concerns are misplaced. Books and popular cultural texts such as films, TV shows, Internet sites, magazines and comic books do not need to be in an either/or relationship with conventional literacy practices. All forms of reading can be incorporated into the curriculum.

Young people will indulge in reading-lite – for example, *Dolly, Cosmopolitan*, the ubiquitous Disney versions of tales, a *Pirates of the Caribbean* novel with Johnny Depp's picture on the front. However, they will also be drawn – with gentle and enthusiastic guidance, through these same audiovisual tie-ins – to Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*, the stories of King Arthur, Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings* and many other classic stories. Students need to experience the junk-food equivalent of books and reading in order to appreciate haute cuisine. Their diet must be varied.

By using popular culture and digital technology together with our knowledge of and appreciation for the literary canon, we can instil in students a passion for books and reading.

The film *Clueless*, starring Alicia Silverstone, is a familiar way of introducing young people to Jane Austen's classic text *Emma*. It is the same story, told in the argot, forms and tropes with which students identify. There is also the film version starring Gwyneth Paltrow. Capture their minds in the present and then invite them to explore the past – to source the original story on which the films or TV shows are based. Ask them to compare and contrast and find other films, novels, TV shows and even computer games that use the same or a similar plot.


Creating stories

In this age of environmental concerns and issues around corporate, political and cultural responsibility, it is easy to enthuse the students – not simply about reading, but also about creating their own stories that explore possible global futures. Use movies like *An Inconvenient Truth* and *The Day after Tomorrow*, and the multimedia program *Afterworld* (available on TV, online and on mobile phones). Encourage students to read articles from *New Scientist*, *National Geographic* and *Australian Geographic* and then novels such as Cormac McCarthy's *The Road*. Entire school terms can be dedicated to reading, viewing, sourcing and creating narratives about the world and the future in a range of genres, from essays, magazine and newspaper articles to graphic novels, creative answers, photo essays and virtual responses.

Another option is to use young adult novels that acknowledge the importance of popular culture and ICT in young people's lives. Traci Gardner (2007, p 93) addresses an ongoing problem for under-resourced libraries. She argues that 'Internet literature' – novels that reflect the social and digital worlds of the students – 'creates unique opportunities to explore the social landscape of the teenager's world while developing the multimodal literacy skills crucial to life in the twenty-first century' (Gardner, 2007). Books that blend a variety of styles by incorporating blogs, emails, journal entries and text messages, and doing so in the truncated language familiar to their users, can also appeal to the digi-kids of today.

Conclusion

Popular culture is a continually shifting territory where identities are fashioned and refashioned. By keeping abreast of just who and what is educating young people and, more importantly, what they are learning in the process, teachers can not only intervene where necessary, but make worthwhile and very influential contributions.

Interfacing traditional pedagogical practice with contemporary popular culture and digital technology is a way of keeping not just the library but the curriculum as a foundation stone in a young person's lifelong journey of learning. Combining old and new, traditional and modern, and classical and postmodern means we can turn the impossible passion of popular culture into a passion of limitless possibilities that incorporate a range of successful and insightful reading strategies able to be deployed both inside and outside the classroom – yesterday, today and tomorrow. 

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The full article with bibliography appears in the online version of *Connections* 67 at <http://www.curriculum.edu.au/scis/connections/latest.htm>

Challenges for teacher librarianship in the 21st century: Part 2 – Time and workload

In Part 1, published in *Connections* 66, Barbara Combes discussed the challenges that technology presents to teacher librarians and suggested strategies to effectively respond. In part 2, she examines the joint challenge of time and workload.

What challenges do teacher librarians face in a changed information environment? Before seeking solutions and strategies, it is important to know exactly what we are dealing with. Attached to these challenges are personal and professional issues that may be confronting and uncomfortable, and require us to re-evaluate ourselves and our performance.

Our challenges are:

- 1 technology
- 2 time and workload
- 3 status and role.

The challenge of time and workload

Two major challenges for teacher librarians in schools are time and workload. A school presents a very complex working environment where staff often spend more time dealing with crisis management than actual teaching and learning. Dealing with students who have social, economic and physical/health issues means that teachers are not only educators but also instructors, surrogate parents, advocates and social workers. Teacher librarians are often viewed by students as non-threatening. The library has traditionally been the place where students go to escape the terrors of the school yard or an unsympathetic teacher or just to get out of the cold.

Coupled with this social role, the library should also be the centre of teaching and learning in the school. It is the place where students can find information and learn to manage, evaluate, authenticate and use it efficiently and effectively. The library provides physical, human and virtual resources that both teachers and students can use to achieve teaching-learning outcomes. It lets students develop, maintain and expand their literacy skills in a non-threatening environment.

Defining your role

The dual role of the teacher librarian as teacher and library manager is time-

consuming and usually involves a workload that is neither understood nor recognised by administration or teachers. Finding ways to deal with these challenges often means changing the focus of the teacher librarian and the library from a service orientation to a dynamic environment that encapsulates the core business of the school: the achievement of quality teaching and student learning outcomes.

Mike Eisenberg calls it our 'martyr complex' (Eisenberg, 2005), but I prefer Gary Green's term, 'humble functionary' (Green, 2004). We need to resist the urge to become obsessed with minutiae and library management or housekeeping. Teacher librarians should be focusing on the bigger picture: the provision of information and curriculum specialist support for teachers and students in the areas of literacy and information literacy learning outcomes. Your job is not downloading catalogue records, shelving books or running after a teacher who suddenly appears at your door and wants a video because they don't have a lesson plan organised. Your job is not crawling under desks checking network cables or plugging in digital projectors for staff who refuse to become technologically literate. Your job is to support teachers in the:

- design of innovative curriculum that embeds information literacy and literacy skills development – this may include the integration of learning technologies and electronic resources
- provision of a range of resources (formats) and delivery modes to support resource-based, independent learning.

Develop strategies to manage your workload

Strategy 1 – learn to prioritise

Decide what you can do as one person and prioritise according to your context. If the systems in your library are not functioning well, there are a thousand items to process and get onto the shelves, if the collection requires a major stocktake and weed, if your physical space needs redesigning and refurbishment to make it more attractive, or if the automated catalogue needs a clean-up and rethink, make this a priority. In many cases we work very hard because

our housekeeping is not in order and the library's systems are not functioning at an optimum level. We struggle with day-to-day management issues. If this is your current context, then take the time to fix it. This will allow you to get on with the major part of your role, which is teaching and learning.

Strategy 2 – be realistic

You may be a lone practitioner with assistance in the form of an untrained officer, providing services for up to 50 staff and hundreds of students. Be realistic about what you can achieve. Trying to do too much is as bad as trying to do too little. Always decide in advance the number and type of programs you intend to implement, the collaborative partnerships you intend to establish and what your contribution will be within that partnership. Be kind to yourself.

Strategy 3 – become a strategic planner

Policies and operational plans are formal documents that clearly outline the goals and direction of the library and how these relate to the core business of the school: teaching and learning outcomes. These are essential documents that we rarely complete or update. They provide your Principal with a clear articulation of your role, the place of the library within the school and your expertise, and form a basis for applications for future funding and extra staff.

Your strategic or operational plan should always include a time allocation and clearly indicate who is responsible for completing which tasks. It should provide an analysis of library staff workload and library operations. You should always take the time to evaluate your performance and complete a report at the end of the year. This may be as simple as highlighting those things you managed to complete in blue with some brief commentary about your successes. Those that remain incomplete should be highlighted in red, with a brief explanation such as 'not enough time', 'limited staff' or 'budgetary constraints'. These policy documents should be updated and signed off by the Principal every year.

Strategy 4 – learn to delegate and collaborate

Work smarter, not harder. Delegate tasks and empower your staff members. Hold

Challenges for teacher librarianship in the 21st century: Part 2 – Time and workload (cont.)

regular meetings where they provide written reports and updates on their areas of responsibility. Include them in the operational planning process and have clear processes and procedures in place. Begin by writing down everything you do and then determine those things that can be delegated. Remember that no one is, or should be, indispensable.

Review good management practice theory by:

- listening to your staff and creating a team environment
- giving public praise and recognition
- delegating tasks and managing/monitoring operations, resisting the urge to check up by re-doing the task
- clearly indicating your role and sticking to it when collaborating with teachers; don't offer to do everything just to get access to the students.

Strategy 5 – don't make assumptions

Don't make assumptions about your collaborative partner; they may have hidden talents. Always begin your collaborative negotiations from a position of strength. Have a draft program already written that includes a rationale, student learning outcomes from the library perspective, possible activities and resource support (including information literacy documents to scaffold student learning), assessment rubrics and a clear outline of responsibility. When conducting your collaborative interview with teaching staff, always have a sweetener such as tea/coffee and chocolate biscuits on hand.

Collaboration with you should always be seen as a positive experience.


Wherever possible, turn student interactions into a tangible teaching-learning opportunity. For example, if the assessment calls for students to produce a PowerPoint presentation, create a series of reusable tutorials where students must gain an introductory, intermediate or advanced certificate/licence in PowerPoint. Tutorials might cover using the software, design principles and how to make an oral presentation. Link the integration of this learning technology to student outcomes and the assessment rubric to be included in the program. Include a pre-test to review prior learning and revise old skills. Use checklists, observation charts, portfolios and rubrics to make assessment less onerous, but consistent and rigorous. Assist in the development and execution of assessment rubrics, and teach with your collaborator wherever possible. Active participation in curriculum design and execution will raise your credibility with staff.

Strategy 6 – staff professional development

Management of professional development for your staff should always include a formal performance management process. Staff become responsible for their own professional development and the process allows for an open exchange of ideas and information. This will ultimately save you time and decrease your workload. You are the 'ideas person', the catalyst and specialist support teacher to help teachers design, teach and assess innovative, resource-

based curriculum. Good management is the process where others do the work for you. Take the time to help teachers increase their skill levels rather than doing it for them.

Strategy 7 – promotion and advertising

When deciding on your priorities and strategic or operational goals, remember to take little steps. Inform your community about your successes through the school newsletter. Set up displays outside the library, especially during parent-teacher nights. Share your achievements with others at school professional development days, local conferences and in your professional association's journal or in the local newspaper. Always credit collaborative partners and recognise the support of your Principal and other key players in your school community. Promote yourself, your library, your staff and your expertise. 

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See the next issue of *Connections* for *Challenges for teacher librarianship in the 21st century: Part 3 – Status and role*.

This article is based on the keynote address presented at the Libraries Linking Learning and Literacies, South Africa, 8–11 August 2006.

The article with bibliography appears in the online version of *Connections* 67 at <http://www.curriculum.edu.au/scis/connections/latest.htm>

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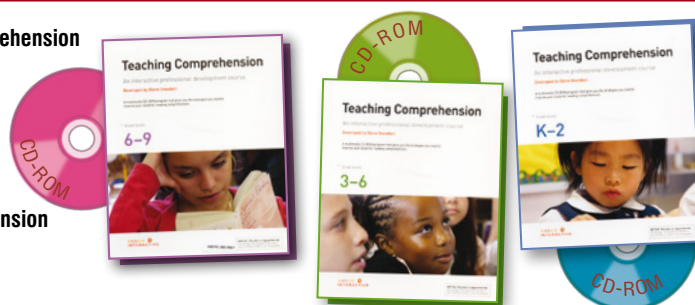
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Internetting corner

Abbreviations and Acronyms Dictionary

<http://www.acronymfinder.com/>

Students and teachers wishing to access a quick solution to the myriad acronyms and abbreviations in use should bookmark this handy reference site. There are over 600,000 definitions listed.

SCIS No: 1370531

Animal Fact Sheets

<http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/edresources/AnimalFactSheets.htm>

Focusing on the reptiles, birds and mammals that are found in NSW, this resource contains information, quizzes and photos. Links to related topics include national parks, nature conservation and cultural heritage.

SCIS No: 1370539

ASLA – School Library Policies and Procedures Manual

<http://www.asla.org.au/policy/manual.htm>

Teacher librarians who are contemplating writing or updating a library policy and procedures manual definitely need to investigate this website. All aspects of writing a comprehensive manual are covered and a useful online scaffold is available.

SCIS No: 1370550

The Chemical Detective

http://agrippina.bcs.deakin.edu.au/bcs_courses/forensic/Chemical%20Detective/index.htm

This absorbing website encourages secondary students to examine the role of forensic science in criminal and civil proceedings. The fundamental scientific principles of a variety of key concepts are explained.

SCIS No: 1370583

Earth Calendar

<http://www.earthcalendar.net/index.php>

Students can discover the diversity of holidays and celebrations around the world on this useful website. They can search by date, country, religion and even lunar phases.

SCIS No: 1370591

EduGator

<http://www.edugator.net.au/>

Teachers looking for fresh ideas on how to integrate information technology into the curriculum will find a wealth of material here. Topics covered include digital photography, blogs, podcasts, interactive whiteboards, robotics and animation.

SCIS No: 1370598

EngQuest Entry

<http://www.engineersaustralia.org.au/careers/engquest-2008/engquest-entry.cfm>

Engineers Australia, with support from the Australian Government, has created a series of interesting engineering tasks related to each state's curriculum. A range of teacher and student activities, ideas and background information is provided.

SCIS No: 1370605

Food Force

<http://www.food-force.com/>

Focusing on world hunger, this United Nations website encourages primary or secondary students to delve into the complexities of hunger, identify those areas of the world suffering from hunger and explore how to combat the problem. The website features a virtual reality game coupled with news updates, photo galleries and video clips.

SCIS No: 1370661

FourFourTwo Australia – The Ultimate Football Website

<http://au.fourfourtwo.com/>

With its wealth of Australian and worldwide football (soccer) content, this website will be a hit with football fans. Published by the magazine of the same title, the site contains many examples of contemporary website design including news, videos, features, blogs and forums.

SCIS No: 1370675

Global Carbon Exchange

<http://www.climate-wise.com/calc/fnpw005/active/packages/index.php>

Students are becoming increasingly aware of the terms 'carbon footprints' and 'offsets'. This website calculates the impact of these carbon footprints and the necessary offsets to compensate. A variety of scenarios can be calculated.

SCIS No: 1370682

Science and Technology Information from Scientific American

<http://www.sciam.com/>

The US publication *Scientific American* has maintained a web presence for over a decade. This website contains current scientific articles, daily news, features, podcasts, videos and quirky scientific trivia.

SCIS No: 1047960

Science Postcards – Science Exploration Through Stories

<http://www.sciencepostcards.com/>

Sponsored by the New Zealand Association of Science Educators, this striking site assists primary teachers to integrate science and literacy. Key concepts can be explored in a stimulating manner, with all relevant material available to be downloaded.

SCIS No: 1370183

wickED – Topics: Eat Well and Exercise

http://www.tki.org.nz/r/wick_ed/topics/eatwell/mini1.php

Another pertinent and opportune resource from New Zealand's Ministry of Education, this interactive website encourages students to engage in physical activity and eat a balanced diet. It contains links to other curriculum areas.

SCIS No: 1370688

World Atlas – Americas, Europe, Asia, Africa, Middle East, Oceania

<http://www.infoplease.com/atlas/>

This online atlas features uncluttered country and continent maps and a selection of related current information. Included are country profiles, current statistics, lists of government officials, flags and distance calculators.

SCIS No: 1370698

Reviewed by Nigel Paull, Teacher librarian, South Grafton Primary School. Email: npaull@telstra.com

The Internet sites abstracted in *Internetting Corner* are often of a professional nature and should be initially viewed by teachers and library staff to determine suitability for students. The links, content and address of these sites may not be permanent.

SCIS handy hint

How does SCIS catalogue taped off air videorecordings?

Guidelines have been established for the cataloguing of taped off air videorecordings in the *SCIS Standards for Cataloguing and Data Entry*. Section 5C of the Standards provides instructions for treating taped off air videorecordings. More information is available at http://www.curriculum.edu.au/scis/resources/section5_2008.pdf

SCIS uses the general material designation (GMD) *videorecording*, which appears after the title in brackets. The GMD is a broad designation. There has been no change to the Anglo-American Cataloguing Rules and SCIS uses terms from these rules for the GMD. Cassette (VHS) and DVD are both treated as a *videorecording*, just as CDs and sound cassettes are both *sound recording*.

SCIS No: 1360550

Title: Natural disasters [videorecording]

Series: [Behind the news specials](#)
[BTN special](#)

Publisher: [Sydney?]: ABC, 2007.

Description: 1 cassette (15 min.) : sd., col. with b&w sequences.

Contributors: [Bazley, Nathan](#)

Subject Headings: [Disasters. scisshl](#)
[Natural disasters. scot](#)

Call Nos: 551 NAT a14
551 NAT 22

Notes: Title from Education TV program guide.
Presented by Nathan Bazley.
Summary: Planet Earth can be unpredictable and destructive and this Behind the News special looks at Natural Disasters, how and why they occur as well as what can be done to cope with some of the consequences. From the devastation of floods to the desperation of those caught up in the crippling drought, we also look further afield to the earthquakes of Indonesia and ask if Australia's at risk. (From ABC program guide).

VHS.

Contents Note: Contents: Floods
Storm recovery
Drought
Earthquake.

SCIS OPAC screen dump © ExLibris Incorporated
An example of a SCIS OPAC search for a television program recorded on cassette (VHS)

You can search SCIS OPAC to find records for television programs. In a *Guided search*, type the title or series name as a *Title* and include 'videorecording' as a *GMD*. The search result will retrieve records for DVDs and cassettes.

Curriculum Corporation SCIS OPAC

Search Headings Titles History Help Exit

Database Name: Curriculum Corporation

Basic search Guided search New SCIS records

Find: behind the news all of these In: Title

AND OR NOT

Find: videorecording all of these In: GMD

AND OR NOT

Find: all of these In: Keyword Anywhere

25 records per page Search Reset More Limits

SCIS OPAC screen dump © Ex Libris Incorporated
An example of a SCIS OPAC search for videorecordings

Use SCIS OPAC to locate and order television program records for your library system. The SCIS No. appearing at the top of a record can be used to order the record from *Create orders*.

SCIS news

My SCIS profile

SCIS Customer Centre and *SCISWeb* pages have been updated with a new button – *My SCIS Profile*. The *My SCIS Profile* page incorporates all that was previously available from *Change Password*, *Customer Profile* and *SCISWeb Profile*.

Invoices for 2009

Invoices will be dispatched in October 2008 to schools not involved in a bulk deal. The cost of a subscription to *SCISWeb*, *SCIS Subject Headings Online* and *SCIS Authority Files* will not increase in 2009. Payment would be appreciated by the end of 2008.

Holiday access and customer support


It is anticipated that access to *SCISWeb*, *SCIS Subject Headings Online* and *SCIS Authority Files Online* will be available over the summer holiday period.

SCIS Customer Support will be available until Wednesday 24 December 2008 and will resume on Monday 5 January 2009.

New SCIS Subject Headings Online

SCIS Subject Headings Online was migrated to a new software platform in early July. Please note the following enhancements.

- 'Starts with' search allows you to browse from initial results to subsequent pages.
- 'Subject headings which contain this word or letters' (previously known as 'string' search) now works more effectively. All matching terms are retrieved, rather than being limited to the number of headings specified.
- The new platform provides a link to Google as well as SCIS OPAC.

We welcome feedback on *SCIS Subject Headings Online* or any SCIS product or service. Please contact us by emailing scisinfo@curriculum.edu.au 

New and revised subject headings


Headings marked with an asterisk in the following list are existing allowed headings which have been updated with changes to references or notes. New headings are marked with an N. Headings which were USE references in *SCIS Subject Headings Fifth Edition* but are now headings in their own right are marked with an A.

For full details of these headings, see the SCIS website at <http://www.curriculum.edu.au/scis/productinfo/supplists.htm>

- * Adventure stories
- * Adventure stories – History and criticism
- * Animal films
- N Animal films – History and criticism
- * Animals in films
- * Art, Modern
- * Assertiveness (Psychology)
- * Auditory perception
- * Australian stories
- * Biographical films
- N Biographical films – History and criticism
- * Comedy films
- N Comedy films – History and criticism
- N Crime films
- N Crime films – History and criticism
- * Diary stories
- * Diary stories – History and criticism
- * Documentary films

- * Dystopian fiction
- * Dystopian fiction – History and criticism
- * English fiction – History and criticism
- * Family – Fiction
- * Family life – Fiction
- * Family sagas
- * Family sagas – History and criticism
- * Fantasy
- * Fantasy – History and criticism
- * Films
- * Films, Australian – History and criticism
- * Food in literature
- * Gothic fiction
- * Gothic fiction – History and criticism
- * Historical fiction
- * Historical fiction – History and criticism
- * Horror films
- N Horror films – History and criticism
- * Love – Fiction
- * Love stories
- * Love stories – History and criticism
- * Medical technology
- A Mystery and suspense films
- N Mystery and suspense films – History and criticism
- * Mystery and suspense stories
- * Nature photography
- * New Zealand stories
- * Organisational change
- * Photography of animals

- * Portraits
- * Romanticism in art
- * School stories
- * School stories – History and criticism
- * Science fiction films
- N Science fiction films – History and criticism
- * Spy films
- N Spy films – History and criticism
- * Supernatural stories
- * Supernatural stories – History and criticism
- * Sustainable development
- * Technological innovations
- * Utopian fiction
- * Utopian fiction – History and criticism
- * Vietnam War, 1961-1975 – Fiction
- * War
- * War – Moral and ethical aspects – Fiction
- * War films
- N War films – History and criticism
- * Westerns
- * Westerns – History and criticism

New reference headings:
 Artistic and literary themes
 Literary and artistic themes
 Motifs in art, literature and visual genres
 Themes 

Connections

Connections is a quarterly newsletter produced by the Schools Catalogue Information Service (SCIS), a business unit of Curriculum Corporation. SCIS is committed to publishing informative and useful material for the benefit of library staff in schools. Our focus is helping library professionals keep up to date with the latest in information services and information technology relevant to school libraries.

Connections is distributed by Curriculum Corporation to all schools in Australia.

Connections content does not necessarily reflect the views of Curriculum

Corporation, the editor, publisher or printer, or imply endorsement by them. Authors retain copyright of articles and should be contacted for permission to reprint.

Connections contributions

SCIS welcomes submissions of articles to be considered for publication in *Connections*.

Articles may range in length from 500 to 2,000 words. Work outside these specifications will be considered.

Contributions and correspondence are welcome and should be forwarded to scisinfo@curriculum.edu.au. Please include your contact details.

Advertising in *Connections*

Advertisements, supplied in electronic form, should be forwarded to SCIS. Contact SCIS for specifications and advertising rates.

Connections online

All articles and regular features are available electronically at <http://www.curriculum.edu.au/scis/connections/latest.htm>

Information literacy, Web 2.0 and graphic novels

The following six abstracts were written by the *Curriculum Leadership Journal* team and directly relate to issues of importance and interest to school libraries.

Engaging teachers, engaging students: Embedding information literacy into classrooms

ASLA Biennial Conference 2007 – Hearts on Fire: Sharing the Passion
<http://www.asla.org.au/pd/conference/>
 Isobel Williams

Ogilvie High School in Hobart has embedded information literacy and ICT in classroom teaching while also adapting to major changes in the state curriculum. Ogilvie is the largest public high school in Tasmania and the only all-girls' government school, serving over 1,100 Years 7–10 students, many disadvantaged. From the late 1990s to 2006, Tasmania's *Essential Learnings Framework* was applied at Ogilvie within traditional subjects. The Essentials included *Communication*, containing the Key Element *Being information literate*, which included ICT skills. Several teacher librarians helped to develop the school's curriculum materials for this area, commonly established information literacy skills, to be developed cumulatively over year levels.

The author was appointed to the school in late 2005 to implement this work. She sought to establish credibility with teachers as being competent and helpful by taking on IT technical help tasks. She attended meetings of the SOSE team responsible for the *Being information literate* area. Successful collaborations with teachers included a project involving digital photography of their local area, cooperation with students in another school and critical thinking work involving Science, SOSE and Health content. Other collaborations involved students researching historical archives to discover and write creatively about 1850s convict women. Teacher librarians have prepared lessons on information literacy topics such as hoaxes and scams. They have provided professional learning for teachers, including ways to move students beyond cutting and pasting from the Internet as well as the use of TLF Learning Objects.

The information literacy program has now been adapted in line with the revised state curriculum, which re-emphasises traditional

learning areas. The curriculum also aims to embed ICT in each area and reflects the influence of MCEETYA's Statements of Learning for ICT. Recent library initiatives at Ogilvie include the development of a digital portfolio for use by teachers in documenting and tracking individual student learning progress. Major hurdles included the lack of compulsory assessment on information literacy, and teachers' resistance to collaboration and planning in this area. School librarians are urged to take on 'the territory of information literacy in the ICT curriculum'.

Raising profiles: An investigation into teacher awareness of information literacy and strategies for increasing understanding of the concept and the role of the teacher librarian

ASLA Biennial Conference 2007 – Hearts on Fire: Sharing the Passion
<http://www.asla.org.au/pd/conference/>
 Alison Pick, Helen Schutz

The authors are teacher librarians at two Sydney independent girls' schools: Wenona School, North Sydney and Santa Sabina College, Strathfield. They surveyed teachers at both schools to identify their views on, and teaching approaches towards, information literacy. Most respondents described information literacy only in terms of students' ability to find information. Respondents did, however, differentiate information literacy from ICT skills and agree that information literacy should be taught explicitly. In terms of their own teaching practice, a large majority of respondents said that they modelled brainstorming strategies and note-taking; however, fewer than half of the teachers regularly tested the information skills of their students at the beginning of each year.

The teacher librarians developed a number of strategies to advance teachers' understanding of information literacy, improve student learning and raise the profile of their school libraries. Students are now tested on information literacy skills on entry to secondary school. Results of the tests so far indicate that new students are reasonably proficient at locating and presenting information but struggle to define information needs and organise material. These results provide evidence

on students' information literacy needs to present to teachers.

Guided inquiry projects have been developed in collaboration with some teachers. Unlike traditional, 'ubiquitous' library research tasks, these projects offer a choice of topic for students and present higher order questions to them. The projects call for monitoring of student progress and targeting to individual student needs. They are generally better suited to longer term projects and older students. The paper includes two case studies.

Library 2.0 library management software offers fresh ways to promote services to teachers and students and represents a move towards a 'virtual library'. This software allows remote access to the catalogue and the creation of individual user profiles through Web or windows-based interfaces that can be customised for different sets of users, such as early primary or senior secondary students. These software systems also facilitate the selective dissemination of information and the integration of searches across databases. Teacher librarians should also promote the use of Web 2.0 technologies such as blogs, wikis, social bookmarking sites and RSS feeds.

Learning 2.0: All about play!

Full article published in: *Synergy* vol 5, no 2, November 2007, pp 29–31.
 Helene Blowers

An online learning program called *Learning 2.0* has been created to help library staff gain confidence in using Web 2.0 technologies. The program is self-paced and guides participants through 23 short discovery exercises over nine weeks. It is available under *Creative Commons* for any non-profit organisation to use and has so far been duplicated by over 100 libraries worldwide, including Melbourne's Yarra Plenty Regional Library network. Participants in the program learn to create a blog and use it to record experiences with software such as Bloglines, PBwiki, Odeo, Flickr and YouTube.

According to its creator, Helene Blowers of the Public Library of Charlotte and Mecklenburg County (PLCMC), North Carolina, USA, the program is designed to transform technology novices into experienced Web 2.0 tutors. It cultivates a sense of play and discovery and incorporates optional challenges for those with extra time

or motivation. Weekly topics include Photos and Images; RSS and Newsreaders; Tagging and Folksonomies; Wikis; and Podcasts, Videos and Downloadable Audio. One month of extra exploration time is offered for 'late bloomers' and those under time pressure.

Organisations implementing the program are advised to have staff work together ('the single reason for the high staff completion rate') and to allow participants to blog anonymously. Small rewards offered on completion of the course, such as MP3 players, provide motivation and are far more cost effective than paying other organisations to train staff in the same skills. There is a focus on exposure and experimentation with the new tools, rather than pressure on participants to get things right.

Literature blogs

ASLA Biennial Conference 2007 – Hearts on Fire: Sharing the Passion
<http://www.asla.org.au/pd/conference/PatPledger>

A blog is generally defined as any web page that has content organised by date. Blogs tend to be updated regularly and contain easily accessible archives of previous entries. If used thoughtfully, blogs may be of great use in school libraries for a number of purposes. Book review blogs, such as Readplus for recently published books and Chicklish for adolescent girls' books, are useful resources for teacher librarians. There are also many blogs with up-to-date information on recent trends and important events in children's and young adult literature. These include Read Alert from the State Library of Victoria and the American site Read Roger, the Horn Book editor's rants and raves.

Reading the blogs of authors can give children insight into the process of writing and drafting. Examples of author blogs are those of Margo Lanagan and Scott Westerfield. The State Library of Victoria's Inside a Dog site is a blog written by their Writer in Residence. Subscribing to blogs on a Rich Site Summary (RSS) feed allows readers to select a number of blogs and receive a daily single-page feed of all updated entries. This can be done through Bloglines. Setting up blogs can also be a worthwhile project for school libraries, motivating students and giving them access to up-to-date information, library resources

and the opportunity to publish their own reviews on an open forum. Blogs can easily be created using software available at Blogger or Edublogs. Examples of school library sites are the 2007 Year 6 library blog hit4six and the 'What Shall I Read Now?' page from Delany Library.

Factors to consider when setting up a blog include its purpose, the intended audience, the amount of time available to dedicate to the blog, and privacy and safety issues. It may also be helpful to have more than one person in charge of updating the blog, since this ensures continuity when students and staff leave the school.

Graphic novels: Trash or treasure?

ASLA Biennial Conference 2007 – Hearts on Fire: Sharing the Passion
<http://www.asla.org.au/pd/conference/DiLaycock>

Graphic novels have traditionally been seen as inferior to other forms of literature, to be used in schools only as a last resort for struggling, bored or unmotivated readers. This attitude may have been due to a widespread underestimation of the complexity of plotlines and content in these books. The images in graphic novels not only provide a scaffold for potentially difficult text, but also engage and stimulate more able readers. They often introduce advanced vocabulary and demanding concepts. Graphic novels cater to students who have strengths in linguistic, spatial and interpersonal intelligence and are often used to engage boys in reading.

The author is a teacher librarian at a boys' college in New South Wales who has experimented with using a graphic version of Shakespeare's *Macbeth* in two English classes. One of the classes consisted of lower-achieving English students and the other of more able students. Both classes read the traditional version of *Macbeth* first. When they subsequently read a graphic version, students in both classes were more engaged and showed a greater understanding of the language, relationships between characters and the characters' emotional states. The teacher of the lower-achieving class commented that the graphic text promoted high-order thinking skills in the students and 'showed them something of how Shakespeare can be viewed in the modern world'.


Graphic novels need to be recognised as promoting both critical and visual literacy with their multi-layered and often highly intricate plots. Some care needs to be taken in selecting graphic texts, since they may contain violent or inappropriate content. Teachers who are considering introducing graphic novels into their classrooms should first familiarise themselves with the genre.

Engaging with graphic novels

ASLA Biennial Conference 2007 – Hearts on Fire: Sharing the Passion
<http://www.asla.org.au/pd/conference/AlleGoldsworthy,PeterMoore>

Graphic novels are books that tell a story through a sequence of panels of artwork, usually with supplementary text. Also known by the Japanese term 'manga', this genre is one of the fastest-growing in the publishing world. Graphic novels offer a unique opportunity to engage students in reading and interpreting texts. The complexity and relevance of these stories is being increasingly recognised, with new works such as Shaun Tan's *The Arrival* and Gene Luen Yang's *American Born Chinese* winning unprecedented critical acclaim.

These books are versatile when used in the classroom. They are especially good at engaging visual learners, reluctant readers and students for whom English is a second language. Graphic novels from Asian countries are also an engaging way to approach studies of Asia. Students often particularly appreciate the chance to create their own graphics-based work after critically studying the form, context and character voices in one or more examples.

South Australian public libraries have been quick to realise the value of graphic novels and have increased their collections to match the popular demand. Teachers and teacher librarians are also beginning to appreciate the value of these novels and introduce them into school libraries and classrooms. 

To receive the weekly electronic journal, register at http://www.curriculum.edu.au/leader/email_alert_registration,102.html

Face-out books made easy

Ever asked yourself: where do I get the shelf space for face-out books? Jim Trelease illustrates the benefits of using rain gutters to hold a lot of books – face-out.

I'm not talking about positioning every book face-out. Bookstores don't place every book face-out, but the ones they really want to move – the new arrivals, the bestsellers – are always displayed this way. Unlike most educators and librarians, publishers know that the cover sells the book. Not only do they work extra-hard designing the right cover, many also pay the book chains as much as \$750 a month per book to have the cover showing. That's how important the cover is.

Nonetheless, classroom teachers have even less room than libraries for this approach. A few years ago, a teacher (whose name I wish I had jotted down) told me how she'd solved the space challenge by installing rain gutters in the dead spaces throughout her classroom: the space between the chalk ledge and the floor, the two-foot space between the closet and the chalkboard. Then another teacher sent me photographs of the rain gutters she'd installed.

The rain gutters they were talking about were purchased at the local hardware store for about US\$3 per ten-foot strip and were made of enamelled, reinforced plastic. As plastic, they were easily cut to any size and were supported by plastic brackets that could be screwed into almost any wall,

including concrete blocks. They also hold a lot of books – face-out.


After I mentioned the concept at an all-day teacher workshop, Mike Oliver (then Principal of Alma Elementary in Mesa, Arizona) approached me at the break. 'We could do this at my school!', he exclaimed with great enthusiasm. 'We could do it in every classroom. I know we could.' I could see the images dancing in his head as he spoke to me. I could also see an inner-city Principal who understood that reading is more than just teaching the basics, more than drill and skill.

That summer, Oliver spent nearly US\$3,000 on rain gutters (I call him the 'Martha Stewart' of rain gutters!). Recruiting volunteers from parents and faculty, he installed the shelving throughout the school, including his own office. Since then, he has been asked to open two new schools (Barbara Bush Elementary and James Zaharis Elementary). Each bears his unique imprint for literacy: children will come to love books if surrounded by quality instruction, a rich print environment, a caring, reading faculty ... and rain gutters. For more on rain gutter shelving, see *The Rain Gutter Literacy Revolution: Enriching the Reading Climate by Advertising Children's Literature* by Mike Oliver and Julie Christensen at <http://www.trelease-on-reading.com/oliver.html>

At a cost of just US\$3 for ten feet, plastic rain gutter shelving turns dead wall space into



Plastic brackets to support rain guttering

an attractive opportunity for face-out book marketing. Rain gutters alone aren't going to solve a school or community's reading problems. They're merely a piece of a marketing strategy. Without marketing, however, few products get off the ground, no matter how good their design. 

Jim Trelease
An award-winning artist and journalist, Jim turned his career toward education in 1979 when he began writing the first edition of The Read-Aloud Handbook.

This is an excerpt from Chapter Seven: The Print Climate in the Home, School, and Library of *The Read-Aloud Handbook* by Jim Trelease (Penguin, 2006, 6th edition).

Available at <http://www.trelease-on-reading.com/rah-ch7.html>

Reprinted with permission.



Rain gutters installed as shelving in an elementary school in Arizona, US

References

Tabor, Mary B W 1996, 'In bookstore chains, display space is for sale', *The New York Times*, January 15, pp A1, D8.

Educational Lending Right

School Library Survey out now!

Once again school libraries across Australia are being asked to participate in the Educational Lending Right (ELR) survey. Survey information has been sent out to 600 randomly selected schools in a Curriculum Corporation envelope, with a distinctive green ELR label.

If you are one of the selected schools, please take the time to undertake the survey. There are no questions to be answered or statistics to be manually retrieved. The survey uses your library management system (LMS) to calculate book title numbers. The process varies depending on the LMS you use.

In some cases, all that is required is for a back-up to be provided. In other cases, a program is provided which is run in the LMS. Step-by-step instructions are provided and, depending on the size of your collection, this should not take long to run.

It is essential that enough survey responses are received to ensure that there is statistical validity to the data collected. For this reason, telephone and email support are provided throughout the survey period. When you have received the survey information, you may receive a follow-up phone call to check whether more assistance is required.

Financial support for the Australian writing and publishing industry

By completing the ELR survey, you are providing the statistics required by the Australian Government's Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts to calculate payments for Australian

authors, illustrators, translators, compilers, editors and publishers. These payments are made on the basis that income is lost from the availability of books in educational lending libraries.

In June 2008, payments totalling \$10.469 million were made to 10,275 Australian creators and 383 Australian publishers. This amount is a considerable boost to the writing and publishing industry, ensuring the continuing growth and development of quality Australian resources for our school libraries.

'I want to do the survey, but never seem to be selected'

To ensure statistical integrity, only 600 schools are randomly selected across Australia. Schools with less than 100 students are excluded from the survey. Selection is also limited to schools that have one of the following library management systems: Alice, AmLib, Bibliotech, Bookmark, Circ/Cat, Destiny, LibCode, OASIS and Oliver. If your LMS is different, we encourage you to speak to the company and urge them to participate in the survey.

Top 100 Australian books

The statistics collected by the ELR survey are used to provide the interesting top 100 Australian books list.

- Mem Fox's *Possum magic* is still number one after eight years. Mem has another three titles in the top 100.
- Emily Rodda has 19 titles in the list.
- Paul Jennings is the next most popular with 13 titles.

- *An introduction to Australian spiders* by Esther Cullen is the new non-fiction book in the top 100.

Fiction newcomers to the list are:

The Barrumbi kids by Leonie Norrington

The best pet by P E Matthews

Dog star by Janeen Brian

Dragonkeeper by Carole Wilkinson

Green fingers by Emily Rodda

Hot stuff by M D Clark

Jade McKade by Jane Carroll

Lockie Leonard, human torpedo by Tim Winton

Once by Morris Gleitzman

Storm boy by Colin Thiele

Tashi by Anna Fienberg

Selby's secret by Duncan Ball

So much to tell you by John Marsden

Specky McGee by Felice Arena

Uncovered! by Paul Jennings

View the top 100 books list at http://www.curriculum.edu.au/scis/partnerships/top100_2007_2008.pdf

Schools participating in the survey last year received a colourful top 100 Australian books poster.



Cipherlab 1166 CCD portable bluetooth wireless scanner

ONLY \$779

Includes communications/charger cradle, USB cable, power pack and two rechargeable batteries.

Transmits barcodes within 50 metres then stores in memory if out of range.

Order form: <http://www.curriculum.edu.au/scis/resources/orderform.pdf>



The Le@rning Federation

The Le@rning Federation won the Best Digital Learning Content Award and a Learning Impact Leadership Award at a ceremony organised by IMS Global Learning Consortium in Texas, USA earlier this year.

New series of learning objects for Early Years

The *Letter planet* series from the English strand of learning objects models how sounds and letters, or letter combinations, form parts of words and highlights the importance of word order in the construction of sentence meaning.

Another series of learning objects where students can rearrange pictures to complete a story – the *Dragon's jumble* series – is now available. Students choose sentences to match the pictures and use temporal connectives such as 'first', 'then' and 'in the end' to show the order of events.



Dragon's jumble: dream – three parts (L7864)

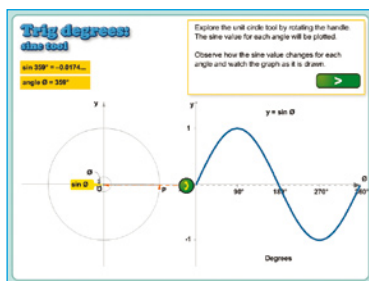
English and literacy

Students learn the art of writing narratives with *Writing narratives: narrative flow* learning objects designed for Years 7–9. They craft a storyline by selecting items based on a problem/solution scenario and by using appropriate pacing. At the end of the activity, students can print their completed plot outline. Creativity is further developed for Years 10–12 students using *Poetry anthology: haiku, sonnet, cyber*. The learning objects start with students creating an online profile and reading a selection of haiku, sonnets and cyber poems. These are then rated on the basis of their themes, moods or imagery. Students can create their own haiku and cyber poems, or write the concluding couplet to a sonnet.

Additional learning objects have been added to ESL following the release of the first set of learning objects, modified for ESL learners from existing TLF learning objects. Students can explore and classify many small living creatures found in Australian gardens using the *Garden detective (ESL)* learning object.

More on offer for senior Mathematics students

New to the Algebra strand of Mathematics and numeracy learning objects is the *Differential calculus* series for Years 11 and 12. With *Differential calculus*, students use first principles to investigate differentiation and are introduced to the language, notation and methods of differential calculus. *Trig degrees* enables students to use an interactive unit circle tool to explore sine, cosine and tangent values and to observe symmetries and patterns in the values.



Trig degrees: sine tool (L9113)

New gizmos in Science

Thirty-one gizmos have been licensed for use from the US-based *ExploreLearning*. Gizmos are interactive simulation tasks that help students develop skills and understanding in Mathematics and Science. Each gizmo comes with an Exploration Guide containing a step-by-step inquiry-based lesson and a set of assessment questions. Feedback and detailed explanation about why answers are correct is also provided.

New assessment learning objects for Mathematics and Science

The broad purpose of the TLF assessment project is to develop and procure digital assessment materials and tools that support the teaching and learning of Mathematics and numeracy and Science in Years 3 to 12. Some assessment items have been licensed from Educational Measurement Solutions (EMS). TLF has worked with EMS to provide the assessment reports for these items. As students work through each learning object, a printable report is compiled detailing the data gathered and the results and conclusions of the student's work.

Images from Getty Images licensed

Getty Images have joined the list of TLF partners for digital resources. New digital resources include spectacular images of world heritage sites and icons such as pyramids and the Great Sphinx;

contemporary images of natural disasters such as the 2005 tsunami; man-made disasters such as the World Trade Centre attacks and the Bali and London bombings; and DNA and nanotechnology images for Science.

Death mask of Tutankhamen (R8323)

Reproduced courtesy of Richard Elliott and Getty Images



Australian Voices

The first 54 recorded interviews for the TLF Australian Voices project are also now available. They include first-hand accounts from people in the creative arts, medicine, sport and politics, accounts of experiences of war and natural disasters and accounts of working and everyday life. For example, Ray Lawler discusses *Summer of the Seventeenth Doll* and Zelman Cowan recalls Northern Territory Self-government Day.

Australian War Memorial and Australian Museum have also joined the list of TLF partner institutes. Licensed digital resources include paintings by official war artists and photos from World War 1 as well as contemporary photos depicting Australian involvement in Iraq. Images of Indigenous tools and artefacts from NSW and QLD, and images of fossils and specimens of extinct and endangered species are also included.



Waiting to welcome their loved ones home, 1919 (R8592)

Reproduced courtesy of Australian War Memorial

Visit <http://www.thelearningfederation.edu.au> to sample some of the latest content and read about how you can use them in your classroom.

For any TLF specific enquiries, email info@thelearningfederation.edu.au

Rohini Mehta
Communications Officer
The Le@rning Federation

Resources

NEW

Active Readers: Tools and strategies for comprehension

Author: Cheryl Lacey
LOWER PRIMARY

76 pp
RRP: \$34.95
SCIS No: 1334091
ISBN: 9781863666664

MIDDLE PRIMARY
76 pp
RRP: \$34.95
SCIS No: 1334092
ISBN: 9781863666671

UPPER PRIMARY
76 pp
RRP: \$34.95
SCIS No: 1334094
ISBN: 9781863666688

Active Readers celebrates individuals and the unique way each student connects with the text, shares their understandings and explores unfamiliar territory to become competent, confident, critical readers.

This series of three books for lower, middle and upper primary provides an overview of comprehension, six key comprehension strategies and resources to invite discussion and engage students in active reading behaviours.

Each book features text explorations grouped under the six key comprehension strategies: prediction/prior knowledge, thinking aloud, text structure and features, questioning, visualising and summarising. The explorations are designed to suit shared, guided and independent reading and are each accompanied by a planning guide and a graphic organiser. The graphic organisers can be interchanged among the text explorations, creating hundreds of possibilities for investigating comprehension.

This versatile comprehension series is a resource that will be readily absorbed into everyday classroom practice.



The Writing Circle

128 pp
Author: Sylvia Gunner
RRP: \$49.95
SCIS No: 1332968
ISBN: 9781551382173
Years 4–12

Writing circles create a natural, cooperative learning environment where students build on what they know, and inspire each other to grow as writers.

This comprehensive resource includes everything you need to support writing circles in your classroom. Sample lessons include specific learning goals and suggestions for student and teacher roles.

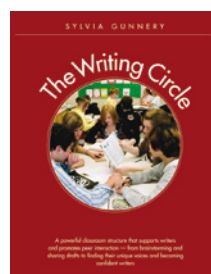
Many of these lessons require that the teacher guide the writing circles, step-by-step, through activities, but gradually students will become more independent as they build skills and become more confident writers.

Revision techniques and tips for encouraging the use of reference tools are a major focus of the book and lessons.

Talking, Drawing, Writing: Lessons for our youngest writers

276 pp
Authors: Martha Horn and Mary Ellen Giacobbe
RRP: \$49.95
SCIS No: 1332782
ISBN: 9781571104564
Stenhouse Publishers

In the early years, talking and drawing can provide children with a natural pathway to writing, yet their potential is often overlooked. In *Talking, Drawing, Writing*, Martha Horn and Mary Ellen Giacobbe invite readers to join them in classrooms where they listen, watch and talk with children, then use what they learn to create lessons designed to meet children where they are and lead them into the world of writing. The authors make a case for a broader definition of writing, advocating formal storytelling sessions in which children talk about what they know, and focused sketching sessions in which budding writers learn how to observe more carefully.



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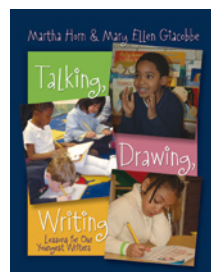
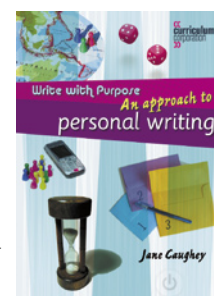
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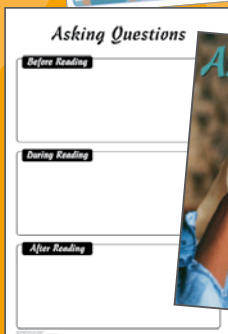
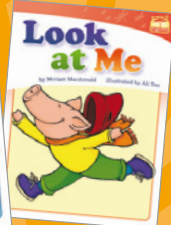
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